

Obituary for individuality

Cable television is at the heart of the evil that is conformity



A.L. FORKNER is a junior news-editorial major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

I was conducting research on the effects of sunshine and fresh air on the sleeping habits of the typical adult male last week. So, as I was sleeping on a bench in front of Avery Hall, I overheard a disturbing fact.

The Spice Girls have a video game coming out (shiver).

However, I also heard something else that got me thinking (no small feat, mind you).

This girl was talking to a classmate. She was wearing platform shoes, black stretchy pants and a Gadzooks top.

Basically, she looked straight out of a Monica video.

No, not that Monica – the pop singer. Sickos.

No big deal, right? However, she was telling her friend that she was going home for the weekend to Bassett.

Which leads me to my gripe of the week.

How can we make fun of small-town hicks when they don't look like small-town hicks?

As painful as this is, I have to blame cable television. (I'm sorry, girl, I really am. Can we still be friends? I'll still watch you.)

Cable TV and its most evil agent, MTV, are slowly killing all of the regional foibles that make this the

melting pot.

Maybe I'm just nostalgic, but I liked the days when East Coast people acted and dressed like they were better than us.

I miss small farm towns filled with coveralls and work boots. Real work boots, not the \$200 Dr. Martens.

How I miss the days of West Coast people having the newest "thing" in clothing. I vaguely remember it looking like a shower curtain with glitter and a denim belt.

Thank God, Southerners are still painfully behind. Whee ha!

With MTV telling us what to wear, what to say and what is in, the country is becoming one large bland piece of paper.

I hate paper.

Last Sunday the Lincoln Journal Star – that's the paper with the easier crossword – ran a photo question asking teen-agers who decided what they wore.

In exact words, the students credited MTV for influencing their tastes.

In one case a girl replied that she wore military fatigues because the group No Fear does.

I shudder to see what Marilyn Manson fans chose to wear to the prom.

Don't get me wrong, I can understand the pressure to be wearing the "right" things or saying the "right" things.

I went to grade school. See, when I was a kid ... I didn't just say that, did I? I did? Boy, do I need a drink.

Anyway, when I was younger we followed trends too. Hey, I wore one batting glove in Little League; I was with it.

But I was 7 years old. Seven.

I don't think a 7-year-old could afford to be trendy today. Hell, I can't afford to be trendy today.

The great beast MTV needs to be stopped. The country is losing its regional identities.

Do you realize how dull the song "California Girls" would be if it were written today?

"Well, East Coast girls are hip, I really dig those styles they wear. And everyone else looks just like them, from their clothes right to their hair.

"I wish they all could be Music TV girls."

It's not just females either. Men are just as guilty. Let me just give you one example.

The commercial states that these jeans are so hard that when you fall down, they will scrape your skin.

Oh, I hope they make underwear available too.

I wear Levi jeans, but the plain ol' ordinary ones. Oh yeah. They fit too.

Of course, I really shouldn't put all the blame on MTV. Again, it's painful, but all TV shares the blame. (Honest, honey, I don't want to fight with you. It's just the truth. Please try to understand.)

Need an example? Monica Lewinsky is now sporting the "Rachel" haircut, for goodness' sake.

Remember Paula Jones? After her makeover she had braces and a hair-

cut styled after a certain cast member of "Friends." And it's not Chandler.

Remember Linda Tripp? Tell me she doesn't look like John Goodman in drag.

See, it's all due to TV's influence. You might ask, "So Mr. Big Shot Columnist Dude, if you're so anti-trend what do you wear?"

You might ask. I might not answer.

But in this case I will. "Mr. Forkner is sporting the classic Levi blue jeans. Notice they aren't hard, and they are the proper size for his svelte figure.

"He is also wearing a lovely Jimmy Buffett T-shirt. Forkner's cap is a giveaway from his favorite tackle shop.

"He finishes off the ensemble with a pair of \$4.99 flip-flops that he bought at a K-Mart in Miami."

You think you have me, don't you? A Jimmy Buffett T-shirt? He's a musician. Aren't I being influenced by the pop culture?

Hey, name me one song Buffett's done except "Margaritaville" and "Come Monday." Pop culture, my shiny butt.

I also will guarantee you that he will not be seen anytime soon on MTV.

I don't know why the death of individuality scares me. Maybe I'm just afraid that someday there will only be four cliques to choose from.

Baby.

Posh.

Scary.

Sporty.

If you'll excuse me, I need to go into the living room and make up with an old friend, if she'll listen to me.

Now where's that damn remote control at?



MATT HANEY/DN

Cast your vote

Students must respond to Initiative 413 to avoid expensive mistake



ADAM KLINKER is a sophomore English and history major and a Daily Nebraskan columnist.

Within the 3,500 words of the newly introduced Initiative 413 is a government spending limit that is a dangerous proposition, detrimental to the citizens and future citizens of this state.

Basically, the initiative, if passed, would make up roughly 11 percent of the Nebraska Constitution – that's a lot of legalese.

As a writer, I know that not much clarity or understanding can come from 3,500 words of legislative banter.

But the concern lies in the framework of that language and the dangers inherent in its presence in the constitution.

On the surface, Initiative 413 looks inviting to the average Nebraskan. Lower taxes, less of that wretched government spending and, on the whole, less government.

But in the fantasy world created by Citizens for Nebraska's Future, the proponents and originators of the proposed tax lid of Initiative 413, despite lower taxes and revenues, the state still will be able to maintain its

programs.

Let's take a random survey. For all its heat in summer, its cold in winter, its mosquitoes and horseflies; for all its wide open spaces and limited urban areas and flat fields of corn and rolling city streets; for its universities, for its people – raise your hands if you like Nebraska.

Let's make it easier – raise your hands if you like higher fees for fishing and hunting licenses. Raise your hands for paying more to get into a state park.

For students, raise your hands if you want to pay higher tuition to attend state universities.

If Initiative 413 should pass in the Nov. 3 election, Nebraskans can expect an increase in all of the above – and cutbacks in areas such as rural development and in the State Patrol.

But at the University of Nebraska-Lincoln, the latter survey question is the focus for most students on campus – the tuition.

It's obvious to most that this particular piece of legislation, if passed, would be injurious to students, staff and faculty members alike.

Not only would it affect the learning community at UNL, but the entire population of the University of Nebraska System. Staff salaries would be decreased, staff members could be more easily released and whole curriculum areas could be cut entirely.

Higher tuition for less education? In May, the university reported a budget cut of \$14,949,598 for the fiscal year 1999-2000 should Initiative 413 pass.

Citizens for Nebraska's Future,

the business leaders of the state who have proposed the amendment, stated that the directive in its amendment is to "slow the growth of government spending and cut taxes in Nebraska."

Its numbers regarding the situation offered a contradiction to what they propose – a wash of double-talk.

The pro-tax lid group said the state budget would continue to increase as a result of growing tax revenues from inflation and a growth in state population.

It claims that \$52.7 million (tax revenue increased by inflation and population growth) will go into the general fund, thereby making it eligible for allocation to the universities by the legislature.

What about fees, State Patrol protection and other important state-supported resources? All types of programs need to be carefully inspected by the legislature.

Suddenly the universities would become less of a priority.

Citizens for Nebraska's Future has implemented some suspicious fail-safes in its amendment. Members say neither tax revenues nor spending is cut or capped, but they are limited.

What is the difference?

Citizens for Nebraska's Future thinks it can sustain the current state-supported programs and still cut taxes. Any powerful body that can do that would already have every high office in the nation.

What Citizens for Nebraska's Future should say is that it plans on slowing the growth of Nebraska as a

whole and cutting the ties that students have made to this state, all the while putting a stranglehold on education.

How can Citizens for Nebraska's Future proclaim itself as such if it is against the very thing that is any state's future – its students?

The passage of this amendment would ensure an increase in tuition. An increase in tuition would ensure a decrease in admission to the state universities. A decrease in admission equals a decrease in graduation.

A decrease in graduation means fewer students remaining in this state.

The cycle would eat away at the composite population of this state.

Certainly, capping taxes would entice more businesses and people, but the majority of those operations would be from places other than Nebraska.

I praise Gov. Ben Nelson for standing fast to the idea of keeping Nebraskans in Nebraska to do Nebraska's business.

With passage of Initiative 413, Gov. Nelson's proposition would die along with any chance of keeping a state connection with its best and brightest young minds.

For the student, if it's the only political thing you ever do in your life, you should be voting on Nov. 3. Vote to lower your taxes or vote to maintain a reasonable tuition bill. It's your choice.

Register to vote. You'll have no excuse on Oct. 5 when the Nebraska Election Commission will be at UNL to register students.

If you can't make that, drive

home and register and drive home and vote if you want to avoid the perceived hassle of absentee balloting.

What if you live so far away that a trip isn't practical? You can vote absentee – no problem. Just clip out or copy down the following, and send it to the courthouse in your home county, filling out the name of your county seat or hometown:

To the Election Commissioner of _____ County.

Dear Sir or Madam:

I would like to come home and vote in the Nov. 3 election because I am a hard-working college student concerned about the real future of Nebraska.

However, because of the extensive journey between Lincoln and _____, and my busy class schedule and other activities, I am unable to make this trip.

It would be greatly appreciated if you would send me the information and registration for voting on the absentee ballot. Thank you very much.

Be sure to sign this letter and include your return address at school.

Do your part by voting against Initiative 413 if you feel Nebraska needs a bright future to look forward to – a future provided by its students.